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RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 7210  
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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INSB, PASS TO IRENE MARR S/GWI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2020

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [KPAO](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: IWOC: PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2010  
SRI LANKAN RECIPIENT

REF: STATE 10500

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PATRICIA A. BUTENIS. REASONS: 1.4 (B, D)

11. (U) This is an action request for Department. See Paragraph 2.

12. (C) Post is delighted with the selection of Sri Lankan nominee Jensila Kubais as a recipient of the Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. Post recommends that the Department revise the citation narrative listed in reftel for Ms. Kubais due to her concerns about reprisals by the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) if the current citation were published. In a meeting with us, Kubais underscored the implications of the wording of the award's citation, noting the importance of avoiding references to her work on "human rights violations" and focusing instead on her work as a "minority community leader" working in a community-based organization, the Community Trust Fund (CTF). While Jensila and her group have been threatened by the Criminal Investigative Division of the Police, no action yet has been taken by officials. But given the recent government crackdown on activists and the media following the presidential election on January 26 and the GSL's sensitivity to human rights allegations, Kubais judged that tagging her as a "human-rights activist" could result in "dire consequences."

13. (C) The 2007 Sri Lankan IWOC recipient, Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena, was vilified in the pro-government press. While Pinto-Jayawardena did not suffer further consequences, the nature of Kubais's work makes her and the CTF more vulnerable to reprisals. At a minimum, she and her organization could be blacklisted and denied access to the government, which until now has yielded positive results. This would be counter-productive to the good work that Kubais has done with the Muslim community and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka.

14. (U) Given these sensitivities, post proposes the following text be used for the Kubais citation in the official press

release and program documents:

BEGIN TEXT OF PROPOSED CITATION:

Sri Lanka: Jensila Kubais. Ms. Kubais is one of Sri Lanka's few women advocates from the country's large Muslim minority population. She lived as an internally displaced person (IDP) for almost 20 years and is a dedicated advocate for women's issues, peace building, legal due process, relief work, mine-risk education and the resettlement of IDPs. She has worked tirelessly as a minority-community leader in IDP camps focusing on uplifting Muslim and Tamil communities and developing grassroots programs on life skills, health, and women's empowerment. She is a vocal supporter of reform and women's rights in the Muslim community. In a challenging political environment, Ms. Kubais has taken unusual risks and surmounted difficult obstacles. She challenged local Islamic cultural practices in her efforts to defend and promote progress for the Muslim community, in particular women and girls. Ms. Kubais' skillful leadership has achieved positive results for the community in a highly sensitive and politicized environment.

END PROPOSED TEXT.

BUTENIS